THE SOCIAL PLANNING and RESEARCH COUNCIL of Hamilton and District

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AN EVALUATION OF THE HAMILTON-WENTWORTH EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS PROJECT (YEAR I)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to carry out an evaluation of the first year of the Employment Awareness Project in Hamilton-Wentworth. This program was initiated as a one year pilot project to be housed within the Employment Services Unit of the Regional Social Services Department.

The project was co-sponsored through a joint funding initiative of Employment and Immigration Canada, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Social Services Department of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth. Additionally, Mohawk College provided staff support (one person) for the Job Search Strategy component.

The general goal of the project was to provide individuals with an awareness of changes in the economy and their own employment opportunities.

The evaluation of the first year's activities included three components: program entry development considerations, in-program considerations and post-program measures. In addition, the methodology incorporated three evaluative perspectives: client-based referrals and participants, program-based stakeholders and community-based data.

Key evaluative questions to be assessed included:

1) The effectiveness of the program in increasing individuals' awareness of community (employment) resources;
2) The structural and functional efficiency and effectiveness of the program in its first year of operation.

The evaluation utilized written surveys, computerized client population data, face-to-face interviews and a program structural analysis to collect information pertinent to the first year assessment.

Client-Based Considerations

Based on the results gathered, program content and structure should remain flexible to the diverse needs of clients, particularly in terms of their age, level of education and diverse cultural backgrounds. Program planners should continue monitoring client profiles to identify barriers to accessing information and programs.

In terms of program impact on clients, the research found that positive effects on employment awareness were achieved through such a program, but the longevity of this impact may be contingent on variables external to the program itself. Thus, the continued effectiveness of the program should be measured and evaluated in terms of development within a "continuum" of many pre-employment initiatives.

Client satisfaction with the program was found to be most attributable to their immediate employment awareness needs.

Structural/Functional Considerations

Critical to the effective operation of the program is the need for continued co-sponsorship amongst all current sources of funding. A growing role has emerged for Mohawk College, in terms of providing resources for the Job Search Strategy Workshops and a newly formed Job Club.

More frequent and regular exchanges of information between the various stakeholders involved in program planning is also an imperative for future consideration.

As part of the local continuum of employment-based programs, it is also critical that the Employment Awareness Project maintain a current and accessible body of information.

Finally, ongoing self-evaluation of this project which is comprehensive is an important component to be maintained over the duration of the program's development.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The current period of economic disruption has affected the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth with great impact, creating a dramatic increase in the number of individuals who are receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIC) or who are pending UIC and receiving General Welfare Assistance. With a local labour market that is shrinking, due to the impact of the current recession, plant closures and bankruptcies in the private business sector have left many previously employed individuals in the unusual predicament of being jobless. Many must turn to social assistance as an interim measure of income maintenance for themselves and their dependents.

For most of these individuals, long-term social assistance is not considered an option. They are employable and job-ready and are willing, if necessary, to take on the training required to find work within a new labour market. For these individuals, having a greater awareness of the local economy and finding new sources of access to training or employment opportunities is an imperative.

In response to this community need, the development of a centre to function in providing information regarding economic awareness, employment-based assessments, and access to training and employment opportunities in the Region, was proposed through a joint funding initiative of Employment and Immigration Canada, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Social Services Department of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth.

In September 1991, the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Social Services Employment Awareness Project was initiated as a one year pilot project to be housed within the Employment Services Unit of the Regional Social Services Department. The general objective of this program has been to provide individuals with an awareness of changes in the economy and the realities of the situation in which they find themselves. In group settings, supportive information regarding Unemployment Insurance and General Welfare Assistance eligibility and employment expectations was to be provided.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

In conceptualizing an evaluation model useful in examining the development of the Employment Awareness Project, it is important to assume that such a program will continue to develop beyond one year. As with most program evaluations, which examine both process and outcome measures, the ongoing, long-term, measure of a program's effects on clients, structural change within the program, and community-based impacts is an ideal model. An evaluative design was developed, based on this project, outlining a process which incorporated a multi-phase approach to measuring the efficacy of the program over time.

As noted in Figure 1, the purpose of this current evaluation (Phase 1 - 1991/92) is to examine the value and effectiveness of this program as measured in its first year only.

The Year One evaluation was to focus specifically on the "inter-phase" development and impacts of the program. Specifically, three inter-connected components of the program were considered:

1. Program Entry/Program Development
2. In-Program Considerations
3. Post-Program Considerations

Three principal sources of information were utilized in the evaluation:

1. Client-Based (referrals and participants)
2. Program-Based (structural/process and delivery agents)
3. Community-based Trends Data.

Using this template (refer to Figure 1), the following general evaluative measures were to be addressed:

a) To determine the effectiveness of the program in increasing individuals' awareness of community (employment) resources;

b) To determine the extent to which the program provided individuals with information or direction to assist them in obtaining employment or training;

c) To determine the degree to which clients used the information provided them.

PHASE I EVALUATION (1991-92)

	PROGRAM ENTRY/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	IN-PROGRAM	POST-PROGRAM
CLIENT-BASED	- Pre-determinants of client involvement: demographic/ socio-economic profile - Reasons for program entry	- In-program feedback and information sharing - Initial group & one-on-one counselling feedback re: satisfaction and awareness of employment potential	- Measurable post-program client impacts (e.g., employment gained, training undertaken...) - Clients' post-program assessments of program effects/effectiveness
PROGRAM-BASED	- Identification of process variables/mechanisms useful in assessment and referral of clients - Identification of appropriate structural variables for program delivery - staff implementation and appraisal	- Staff satisfaction and perceptions of program effects: structural/ functional - Decison-makers' planning/ actions to effect in-program change as needed (Management Board, Co-ordinator, R.S.S., etc.) - Program Referrals (actual vs anticipated)	
COMMUNITY-BASED	- Community labour market trends, monitoring GWA caseload & UI caseload for referral estimates for program - Community stakeholder involvement in needs identification and program development	- Community perceptions & feedback re: program impacts, utility, validity - Initial measures of changes seen across the community as a (partial or otherwise) result of program	- Long-term commitment of community support and validation - Long-term perceived and measurable changes in community-based variables attributable to this specific program

PHASE II EVALUATIONS
(i.e., second, third year...)

- Longer-term measures of program-based changes (i.e., structural transformation to fit environment
- Use of client impact measures for strategic planning

Figure 1: Measures of Employment Awareness Program Evaluation

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Using the three identified sources of evaluative information (i.e., client, program and community) outlined in Section 2.0, a series of measurement tools was developed.

3.1 Client-Based Measures

There were two client-based measures utilized in the generation of evaluative information.

a) Program-Generated Data

This included initial referral-based data collected on each individual deemed appropriate for referral to the program. The data was compiled on-site as each referral was processed by program staff. Monthly data sets were available, profiling each referred individual and denoted by their target group status (i.e., UIC pending, UIC (last 20 weeks), and GWA Job-Ready) [refer to Figure 2].

Two separate printouts were made available, based on a September - December 1991 time frame. The first printout contained a profile of all (n=623) referred individuals who attended at least the initial group information session. A randomly selected sample, representing n=250/623 (40%) of the available data was utilized in the analysis. The unavoidable limitations of time availability and financial resources for initial mailout and follow-up mailout contributed to the selection of smaller sample size.

The second printout contained information on the referred individuals (n=678) who did not attend the program (note: this printout only considered "Reasons for not attending"). Of this group, a 40% randomly selected sample was generated for analysis (n=319).

b) Client Survey Data

A follow-up written questionnaire was developed for administration (by mail) to those individuals who had actually attended the Employment Awareness Project between September and December 1991. This survey focused on the following dimensions:

- client profile (pre and post program)
- current employment reality and level of perceived program impact
- reasons for attending program
- satisfaction with program

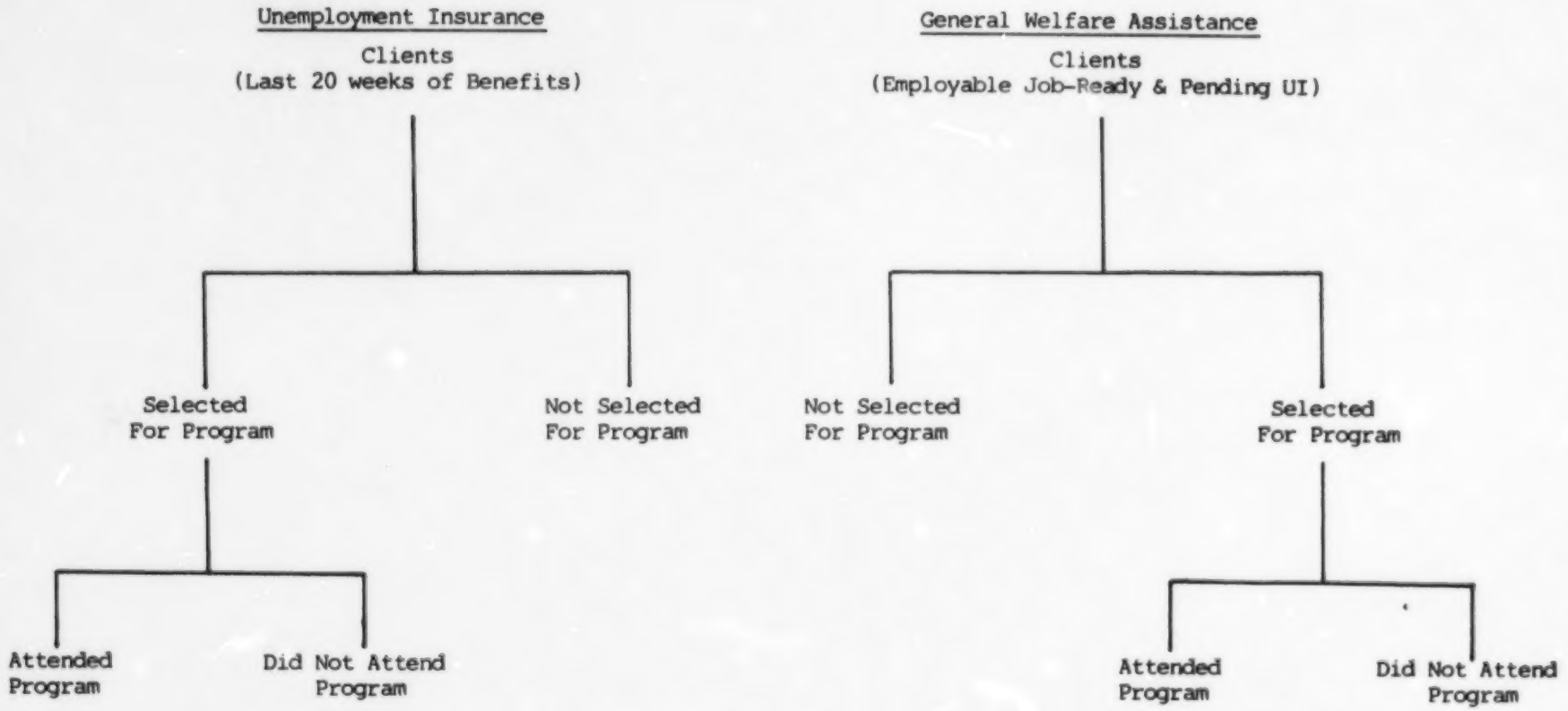

Figure 2: Client Group Data Available for Evaluation

For comparative purposes, the same randomly-selected "attendee" sample (n=250) originally identified through program-generated data files, was sent this follow-up questionnaire in December 1991 using a business reply envelope format. Regional Social Services stationary and SPRC secretarial services were utilized for the mailout [refer to Appendix A].

All compilation and analysis of written questionnaire responses were completed by SPRC researchers using the SPSS/PC+ (version 2.0) software package.

3.2 Program-Based Measures

Two program-based measures were utilized: a descriptive program analysis and a semi-directed, focused face-to-face interview of individual program staff.

a) Descriptive Program Analysis

This qualitative analysis of the program identified and elaborated upon the following areas of program development:

- structure of the program (including stakeholder involvement).
- program content
- program referral process

Information was generated through the ongoing work of a Joint Management Board and program staff at both the proposal and implementation stages of the program.

b) Face-to-Face Program Staff Interviews

An interview form was produced by SPRC researchers to gather information from program staff regarding program-based measures (refer to Appendix B). In March 1992, two SPRC researchers interviewed 8 out of 9 possible Employment Awareness Project staff, including the coordinator, over a two week period. One staff person was not available for interview.

A semi-directed and focused interview format was used and measured the following dimensions:

- background on the participant
- perception of the program
- perception of the clients
- perception of the community

The results of the interviews (n=8) were compiled using a content analysis procedure.

3.3 Community-Based Measures

This component of the methodology was delimited to information gathered through the initial program proposal development, i.e., the work of the Joint Management Board, CEIC/RSS caseload figures generated for September to December 1991 and projected until August 1992, and Regional Planning Department Trends analysis, compiled between 1982 - 1990.

Given the one year time limit for the evaluation and a limited potential for eliciting community response outside of the program itself, the current evaluative component was to monitor only the involvement of "stakeholders" in the developmental process of the project's first year and relevant employment trends across the Region leading up to the program's implementation.

4.0 CLIENT-BASED EVALUATION

4.1 Program Referral/Entry Characteristics

A demographic and referral-based profile was generated from 250/623 (40%) randomly-selected computerized case files gathered by project staff between September and December 1991. Each case represented an individual who had been referred to the Employment Awareness Project during one of these months.

a) Demographic Profile

1) Age

Table 4.1 indicates a broad range of age categories referred to the program, from a minimum age of 21 years to a maximum age of 61+ years. The single largest category of referrals was the group comprising ages of 21 - 30 years. The largest specific "year of age" group was 29 years. The average age of referral program client was 36 years.

An average referral age of 36 years is noteworthy as it suggests that a large number of workers, who had perhaps been active in the workforce for some time, (perhaps recently laid-off and in their last 20 weeks of UIC benefits) were looking for information regarding employment and/or training. With such a high average age for program referrals, it is plausible to assume that many of these older employables already had a battery of skills, including experience in job search techniques. Thus, these individuals may not be as interested in information regarding skills development or job training as much as sources of information leading to more immediate employment opportunities.

TABLE 4.1 AGE OF CLIENT

	Frequency	%
21 - 30 years	89	36.0
31 - 40 years	82	33.0
41 - 50 years	45	18.0
51 - 60 years	25	10.0
61+ years	9	3.0
Total	250	100.0

2) Sex

A much greater number, 166/250 (66.5%) of referred clients were male, as opposed to 84/250 (33.5%) females (Table 4.2).

TABLE 4.2: SEX OF CLIENT

	Frequency	%
Male	166	66.5
Female	84	33.5
Total	250	100.0

When age and sex of referred clients were cross-tabulated, as Table 4.3 indicates, it was noted that, for both sexes, the largest age distributions were between the categories of 21 and 30 years and 31 - 40 years. In this sub-sample, older referrals tended to be female while younger referrals were more likely to be male.

TABLE 4.3: AGE OF CLIENT BY SEX

	Male	%	Female	%
21 - 30 years	63	38.5	26	30.0
31 - 40 years	55	33.5	26	30.0
41 - 50 years	29	18.0	15	18.0
51 - 60 years	15	8.0	11	13.5
61+ years	4	2.0	6	8.5
Total	166	100.0	84	100.0

3) Marital Status

Table 4.4 illustrates a breakdown of the sample by marital status.

TABLE 4.4: MARITAL STATUS

	Frequency	%
Single	161	64.5
Married	79	31.5
Other (separated or divorced)	10	4.0
Total	250	100.0

By far, a majority of referred clients were single, with a total of 161/250 (64.5%). Only 79/250 (31.5%) were currently married and a much smaller number, or 10/250 (4.0%) were either separated or divorced.

When marital status was cross-referenced with age, older clients were more likely married while younger clients were more likely single (i.e., never married). Another correlation of sex by marital status demonstrated that married clients were also more likely to be female.

4) Number of Dependents

A large percentage, or 170/250 (68.0%) referred clients did not have any dependents (refer to Table 4.5). This is reflective of the large previously-indicated sub-sample of single clients noted in Table 4.4 The remaining 80/250 (32.0%) clients had dependents ranging from 1 to 5 in total.

TABLE 4.5: NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS

	Frequency	%
0	170	68.0
1	26	10.5
2	31	12.5
3	19	7.5
4	1	0.5
5	3	1.0
Total	250	100.0

No significant statistical relationship was found between the sexes, in terms of number of dependents. However, when a Pearson's R correlation was calculated on a cross tabulation of age by number of dependents, a modestly positive coefficient (.1064) was found to be statistically significant ($p = .05$). A closer examination suggests that three distinct age groupings tended to have the same number of dependents. Younger clients (21 - 40 years) tended not to have any dependents (e.g., children) - none had more than 3. Older clients (51+) were less likely to have any dependents on their income. Perhaps their dependents had left the home or were relying on their own income. The middle age group (i.e., 41 - 50 years) had a tendency to have the widest range in number of dependents.

Also statistically significant (p=.01) was the positive R (.1940) correlation found between different levels of educational experience and number of dependents. This correlation suggests that clients with a higher than Grade 12 (i.e., post-secondary) education were also more likely to have at least one dependent.

5) Highest Level of Education

Table 4.6 indicates the breakdown of educational experience for the sample.

TABLE 4.6: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Frequency	%
Less than Grade 12	93	37.0
Grade 12 Certificate	68	27.0
College	38	15.0
University	13	5.0
Vocational School	8	3.0
Trades Certificate	10	4.0
Not Specified	20	9.0
Total	250	100.0

The largest group of clients, or 93/250 (37.0%) had less than a Grade 12 education. The second largest group, with 68/250 (27.0%), had at least a Grade 12 diploma or certificate. Thus, 64.0%, or 161/250, had no more than a Grade 12 education. The remaining 36.0%, or 89/250, had some post-secondary educational experience, including vocational or trades certification. An average level of education equivalent to Grade 12 is typical of a longer-term social assistance population.[1]

In a cross tabulation with the age variable, there were no apparent differences between different age groups and level of education. In the younger age groups, more clients had at least a Grade 12 certificate. A total of 51/66 (77.0%) clients with a Grade 12 certificate or higher were under the age of 40 years.

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1 Ball, Caroline A. (1989) An Examination of the Impact of Employment Training Programs on Social Assistance Recipients in Hamilton-Wentworth. Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District.

Approximately the same percentage of males (41%) and females (39%) had less than a high school education. Fewer than 20% of both sexes had a post-secondary education.

In terms of number of dependents and its relationship to level of educational experience, the single largest group of clients, or 65/250 (26.0%), had less than a Grade 12 education and no dependents. The second largest group, with 48/250 (19.0%), had a Grade 12 certificate and no dependents. The only other single group with any larger frequency was those clients having a college diploma and no dependents, with 31/250 (12.5%) clients. In total, 144/250 (58.0%) of the sample had less than or equal to a college education with no dependents.

More data collection regarding the relationship between number of dependents and employability may continue to demonstrate the need for supports in this regard, to gain access to employment and educational opportunities.

6) Source of Income

Upon program referral, each client is classified as eligible to enter the program under one of three sources of income: 1) receiving Unemployment Insurance (last 20 weeks); 2) pending receipt of Unemployment Insurance; or, 3) job-ready and receiving General Welfare Assistance. Due to unavailable data regarding source of income for the months of September and October 1991, a number of cases (n=151) from the four month random sample were missing this data.

A total of 99/250 (40%) clients were analyzed. Table 4.7 illustrates source of income for client referrals.

TABLE 4.7: SOURCE OF INCOME (AT POINT OF REFERRAL)

	Frequency	%
Unemployment Insurance (last 20 weeks)	91	92.0
Pending Unemployment Insurance	7	7.0
Job-Ready General Welfare Assistance	1	1.0
Total	99	100.0

In the sample, the majority of clients, or 91/99 (92.0%) profiled were in receipt of Unemployment Insurance (last 20 weeks).

7) Native Clients

As Table 4.8 indicates, a small proportion of clients referred were native. A total of 15/250 (6.0%) referrals were self-identified as native.

TABLE 4.8: TOTAL NATIVE CLIENTS

	Frequency	%
Native	15	6.0
Non-native	235	94.0
Total	250	100.0

8) Disabled Clients

Table 4.9 illustrates that 21/250 (8.5%) clients were self-identified as having some sort of disability.

TABLE 4.9: CLIENTS WITH A DISABILITY

	Frequency	%
With a disability	21	8.5
Without a disability	229	91.5
Total	250	100.0

b) Program Entry Variables

1) Program Component(s) Attended

A total of 91/250 (36.5%) clients referred attended only an initial group session (refer to Figure 4a, page 32) for information. The remaining 159/250 (64.0%) attended both the initial group session and then followed through to the next stage of the program. That is, they were interviewed by an Employment Advisor and either referred directly to an employment opportunity, referred to an agency-based group information session (for training, employment, or counselling opportunities), or given more in-depth one-on-one employment counselling by program staff (refer to Table 4.10).

TABLE 4.10: TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS PROJECT SESSION ATTENDED

	Frequency	%
Initial Group Session and Follow-up Interview	158	63.0
Initial Group Session Only	91	36.5
Other	1	0.5
Total	250	100.0

2) Month Individual Attended Program

An analysis of the n=250 sample indicates that, over the initial 4 month period of program implementation 105/250 (41.0%) of the aggregate total attended the program in December. September, October and November were "slower" months in terms of individuals referred to the program (Table 4.11).

While not enough data were available to determine, with any confidence, a trend in these monthly figures, it is safe to assume that the September to November period represents the impacts of program start-up. It is also possible that, with time and better organization, referrals began to increase by December. Extrapolating further, it may be that the December 1991 Social Assistance and UIC (last 20 weeks) caseloads expanded with an increasing number of local plant closures and related job losses.

TABLE 4.11: MONTH INDIVIDUAL ATTENDED PROGRAM

	Frequency	%
September	41	16.5
October	65	26.0
November	39	15.5
December	105	42.0
Total	250	100.0

3) Reason(s) for Attending an Employment Awareness Session

Data for this variable were available only through returned written surveys (n=100). There were three principle reasons for attending a session: curiosity, looking for employment information, and/or looking for training information. Table 4.12 illustrates the breakdown of responses to this question.

TABLE 4.12: REASON(S) FOR ATTENDING AN EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS SESSION*

	Frequency	%
Looking for Training Information	39	39.0
Looking for Employment Information	29	29.0
Curiosity	20	20.0
Total	88	-

* Multiple responses were permitted, thus no cumulative percentages are noted.

Clearly, a 30% - 40% portion of those individuals referred to the program had an interest in its main objectives, information and awareness. Other reasons stated were too small in number to note in a table.

c) Reasons for Not Attending

Table 4.13 provides a breakdown of reasons for not attending any components of the Employment Awareness Project. This variable was measured using a 40% sample, randomly selected from n=678 non-attendees.

TABLE 4.13: REASON(S) FOR NOT ATTENDING (n=319)

	Frequency	%
Not interested	106	33.0
Already working	28	9.0
Wrong information given re: availability	26	8.0
Already involved in training, apprenticeship or school	13	4.0
Unable to contact	143	45.0
Other	3	1.0
Total	319	100.0

The largest group of non-attendees, 143/319 (45.0%), likely did not attend the program because program staff were unable to make any initial contact in order to pass on vital program information to potential clients. Of those individuals who were reached, close to one-third, or 106/319 (33.0%) were not interested in what the program had to offer.

To a lesser extent, other potential program entrants were either already working again or involved in some sort of training, apprenticeship, or school upgrading. A total of 26/319 (8.0%) were mistakenly considered eligible for the program but were actually unavailable.

As a result of staff interviews (refer to Section 6.0), it was also noted that clients seemed less able or apt to attend a session that was booked for the very next day, since their personal situations might not have warranted such an assignment as immediately important to them.

d) Areas of Program Interest (as defined by clients)

There were three key areas of interest, vis-a-vis program involvement, defined by clients. These included: 1) job training opportunities; 2) small business development/entrepreneurial, and 3) apprenticeship programs. Table 4.14 indicates a multiple response breakdown.

TABLE 4.14: AREAS OF PROGRAM/INTEREST*

	Frequency	%
Job Training	61	24.5
Apprenticeship Training	16	6.5
Small Business Development	13	5.0
Total	90	-

* Multiple responses permitted.

4.2 Post-Program Client Measures

Of the n=250 original random sample from program case files, only 100/250 (40%) responded to a written follow-up survey sent out by mail in late February 1991.

a) Employment and Income Status

A number of employment and income-related questions were asked as a follow-up to program involvement.

1) Most Recent Occupation

Table 4.15 lists various recent occupations held by program clients prior to involvement.

TABLE 4.15: MOST RECENT (PRE-PROGRAM) OCCUPATION

	Frequency	%
Factory worker	12	12.0
Trades/Apprentice	12	12.0
Office worker	9	9.0
General Labourer	9	9.0
Sales/Administration	9	9.0
Maintenance	7	7.0
Health Care	5	5.0
Food Service	4	4.0
Not specified	33	33.0
Total	100	100.0

The table helps to illustrate that program referral clients were not necessarily reflecting only a certain component of the overall labour market. Even this rather small sample defines a diversity of occupational backgrounds.

2) Current Employment Status

As Table 4.16 indicates, only a small percentage, or 16/100 (16.0%) clients who had been involved in some aspect of the program, actually were employed within 2 - 4 months after attending a session or being referred to another alternative through the program. The remaining 83/100 (83.0%) were either still looking for work or waiting to enter (or presently in) a job training program. Of this number, 50/100 (50.0%) were actively looking for work, while 33/100 (33.0%) were in a training program or waiting to enter a training program.

TABLE 4.16: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS (POST-PROGRAM)

	Frequency	%
Looking for work	50	50.0
In a training program	22	22.0
Waiting for training	11	11.0
Employed full-time	8	8.0
Employed part-time	8	8.0
Not looking for work	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

While it is promising to see that 49% of the respondents had perhaps maximized their program experience by either obtaining employment or entering a training program, it is important to consider the reason(s) or barriers which may have contributed to the lack of success in doing the same with the remaining 51%. This sub-sample frequency distribution suggests that every second program entrant might still be looking for work 2 - 5 months (minimum) after program attendance.

3) Satisfaction with Current Employment

A smaller sub-sample of n=16 clients responded to a question regarding satisfaction with current employment. Table 4.17 provides a breakdown of satisfaction levels.

TABLE 4.17: SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

	Frequency	%
Satisfied	7	44.0
Very satisfied	3	19.0
Unsatisfied	2	12.0
Very unsatisfied	1	6.0
Not specified	3	9.0
Total	16	100.0

A total of 10/16 (63.0%) respondents were satisfied with their current employment status. This figure does not really contribute to a base of knowledge regarding the impact of the program, since the sample size is so small.

4) Current Employment Status (Post-Program) and Its Relation to Specific Client/Program Variables

A series of cross tabulations and correlations were carried out, using the n=100 respondent data, in order to determine if clients' current employment status was affected by either program or situational variables, before, during or after program participation.

i) Attendance at a Program Session

A Pearson's R correlation (R=-.2712) demonstrated that, at the p=.01 level of significance, there was a negative relationship between current employment status and type of sessions attended. Individuals who attended both an initial group session and a follow-up interview demonstrated a greater likelihood of being either fully or partly-employed. Alternatively, those individuals still looking for work were more often found to have attended only the initial group session.

While the sample size was limited, this apparent relationship is most supportive of the need to link-up participants from the initial session to secondary initiatives. That is, merely attending an information session is not an adequate tool for those clients. The implications are at least twofold: 1) enhance the initial group session to provide more effective and useful information, and 2) ensure that clients understand the importance of utilizing the Employment Awareness Project structure in a more functionally effective way, i.e., they really should be supported and prompted to go on to the next session.

ii) Month Individual Attended Program

Regardless of which month the individual entered the program, post-program measures indicated that 50/100 (50.0%) were still looking for work within 2 - 4 months after participating. December was the most difficult month for post-program clients to find work.

iii) Dependents

A correlation coefficient (.1447) at the p=.05 level of significance suggested that, post-program employment status was still affected by whether or not individuals had dependents. The more dependents an individual had, the more likely they were still looking for work regardless of their employment awareness program experience.

iv) Disability, Minority Group

Cross tabulations of these variables indicated that having a disability or being in any other employment minority group did not make a difference post-program. Thus, it appears that these situational variables were neither contributors to nor detractors from effects of the program on employment status.

v) Highest Level of Education

A Chi-square measure was calculated on a cross tabulation of employment status by level of education. At the p=.02 level of significance, there was a difference found in terms of an individual's level of education and their likelihood of employment post-program. A further Pearson's R correlation did not measure any significant association between the variables. With such a limited sample, it was difficult to assume direction of any relationship, but speculation based on the literature suggests that those with a higher education or skills are likely better prepared for immediate employment.

vi) Sex of Client

The client's sex did not have an effect on whether or not the individual was gainfully employed post-program. A correlation coefficient was produced and found to be not statistically significant, given the sample utilized.

vii) Most Recent Occupation

There was no statistical relationship or difference found between current employment status and the type of occupation held by the client immediately prior to their program experience. It does not appear, at least statistically, that type of occupation makes a difference in an individual's potential for new employment, even after receiving more information through the program. A client's re-employment, then, seems more apt to be attributable to the current labour market potential, as opposed to any client-based changes or phenomena.

5) Satisfaction with Program

Three satisfaction measures were taken regarding clients' perception of the program and its effectiveness in meeting their needs. Satisfaction with session(s) attended, identifying what clients liked about the program and did not like, and matching up their levels of (dis)satisfaction with current employment status.

i) Level of Satisfaction with Session(s) Attended

Table 4.18 indicates clients' level of satisfaction with their program experience.

TABLE 4.18: CLIENTS' LEVEL OF PROGRAM SATISFACTION

	Frequency	%
Satisfied	42	42.0
Unsatisfied	21	21.0
Very satisfied	18	18.0
Very unsatisfied	5	5.0
Not specified	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

A majority, or 60/100 (60.0%), were satisfied with their program experience while 26/100 (26.0%) were not satisfied. Another 14/100 (14.0%) did not specify any level of satisfaction.

ii) What Clients Liked About the Program

As Table 4.19 illustrates, the greatest number of respondents, or 27/100 (27.0%) liked the information they had received through the program. To a lesser extent, clients found staff to be helpful and understanding, attentive to clients' needs, and found they liked the structure of the program. A total of 49/100 (49.0%) did not specify a response.

TABLE 4.19: WHAT CLIENTS LIKED ABOUT THE PROGRAM

	Frequency	%
Information received	27	27.0
Helpful and understanding staff	12	12.0
Program structure	5	5.0
Gave a more positive outlook	3	3.0
Individualized attention	1	1.0
Materials (e.g., pamphlets)	1	1.0
Not specified	49	49.0
Total	100	100.0

iii) What Clients Disliked about the Program

A total of 38/100 (38.0%) clients responded that they did not like the program. Of this number, 21/38 (55.0%) did not find the information provided useful. Another 13/38 (34.0%) felt the program did not provide

enough training options or information to the client, and a further 4/38 (11.0%) felt the program was too short in duration. Refer to Table 4.20 for more information.

TABLE 4.20: WHAT CLIENTS DISLIKED ABOUT THE PROGRAM

	Frequency	%
Information was not useful	21	55.0
Not enough training possibilities	13	34.0
Program too short	4	11.0
Total	38	100.0

iv) Level of Program Satisfaction and Current Employment Status

In a cross tabulation of the variables "program satisfaction" by "current employment status" there was a modestly significant ($p = .05$) positive relationship demonstrated when a Pearson's R correlation coefficient was calculated. In this matrix, people most satisfied with the program were also most likely to be employed post-program. Likewise, those clients with the least program satisfaction were more likely to still be looking for work.

This seems to suggest, then, that the program is most beneficial to clients who have either a greater potential for employment (e.g., high education, already with skills, etc.) going into the program or that those clients who have had a satisfying experience in the program are better prepared (possibly motivated) to search out and find jobs or training.

4.3 Non-Response Bias

In order to determine the extent to which the sample of $n = 99$ survey respondents may have been biased, in terms of responding to a written survey, a comparison was drawn on specified variables between the responding and non-responding groups in the study.

A series of statistical means tests, known as t-tests, were carried out to determine if there were any significant differences between respondents and non-respondents on the following variables:

- age
- sex
- highest level of education
- number of dependents
- month program was attended

- type(s) of program session attended
- marital status

Results of the t-tests indicated that the variables "age", "highest level of education", "month program was attended", and "type of session attended" also played a role in determining which clients might respond. However, only "age" demonstrated the most significant bias in response rates. At the $p = .001$ level of probability, it was determined that older program attendees were more likely to have returned a written survey. The remaining significant variables identified contributed much less to the variance between the respondents and non-respondents.

4.4 Conclusions

a) Client Population

With an average participant age of 36, the program has a high percentage of older workers referred through its staff. Since many of these employable clients are likely to already have acquired specialized skills, they may not benefit as much from information re: training or upgrading as much as information or meaningful employment opportunities.

It is also evident that a large percentage of program referrals comprise clients who are single or have no dependents on their income. No difference exists between males and females in terms of dependents. This implies that many of these individuals would be more likely to accept advice regarding an intermediate activity relative to their personal economic situation. That is, they may be more willing, because they are the only one depending on their income, to enter training programs, finish their education and so on.

In terms of highest level of education, the sample did not reflect any differences across age or sex variables. However, a majority of clients did have less than or equal to a Grade 12 education. Implications for program development are that, with such a diverse cross-section of educational and maturational levels in client groups, its structure must be as flexible as possible to maximize effective participation. That is, materials can be understood by all participants, assessments account for differences in aptitude and skill potential, and so on. In keeping with other recent studies on the local social assistance population, the current sample was consistent insofar as a Grade 12 Diploma or less is the means for educational experience.

A large majority of program clients did not have any dependents. This is reflective of a trend which may grow or level out as the program continues over time, wherein clients who are applying for social assistance and Unemployment Insurance are primarily single and without dependents. Alternatively, it may be a indication of a certain bias regarding program referral of clients. Not enough data exists to be able to state this without

concerns for validity, but future program development may need to consider a strategy for reaching a more diverse target group.

b) Program Entry

A strong majority of referred clients attended both the initial group session and a further component, such as a one-on-one interview for counselling. This suggests that, at the very least, some factor is prompting these individuals to go on to the next step. For example, the chance to meet one-on-one with a counsellor, or to get more critical information on a specific training program may be logical next steps for these individuals. It may also be that they are satisfied with the degree to which they received valuable information, in order to make better employment-related decisions and have decided to continue through the process.

Monthly attendance figures increased consistently over time (with the exception of November 1991) between September and December 1991. Any number of factors may have contributed to this trend. Perhaps it is the natural result of program enhancement (i.e., over time, referrals became more efficiently processed, staff became more comfortable with the program's structure). It may also be indicative of increased public awareness due to a subsequent increase in social assistance rolls. More data on monthly program referrals may provide better insight.

Clients had three primary reasons for attending at least the initial session: curiosity, the need for employment-related information, and the need to look for training programs. It appears that the principle program objective of providing employment awareness to the local population is consistent with many clients' needs.

In terms of referrals who did not attend any sessions, the greatest determinant seemed to be a lack of interest on the part of the individual. A secondary factor might be attributed to program staff's inability to make contact by phone, due to any number of reasons.

Upon further investigation, the researchers cross-referenced feedback from program staff to identify three additional reasons for a client's non-attendance. The need to know English as a second language was perceived to be a barrier to the provision of useful information for a client upon first contact. If the client cannot process the information given in a way which is understandable for him or herself, then it is less likely they would be able to participate in even the first group information session.

A second reason for not attending was attributed to the initial (but discontinued) practice of caseworkers referring clients to the program with an appointment set up for the very next day. This seemed only to lend itself to more frustration for the client, who may have just been processed through the Income Maintenance Department and who may be still confused with too many immediate responsibilities.

A third reason noted by staff hinged on the practice of attempting to contact potential clients one month late of their actual entry into the GWA system. That is, staff were accessing computer printouts from one month prior to our initial program contact attempt. Thus, it was possible that, after one month, many of these clients might actually be out of the system, i.e., employed, full-time in receipt of UIC, etc.

Three participant-identified activities were considered of most interest: 1) job training opportunities; 2) small business/entrepreneurial development, and 3) apprenticeship programs. This has implications for program materials, as well as agency group information re: training, employment and counselling possibilities.

c) Post-Program

Only one-half of clients who enter the program end up employed within 2 - 4 months after involvement. With limited data, it is not possible to extrapolate whether environment (e.g., labour market) or situational (e.g., health, income, etc.) variables contribute more or less to this trend.

Clients referred to the program reflect a broad cross-section of occupational backgrounds.

When an individual attends both the initial group information session and the follow-up counselling or agency information sessions, they are more likely to attain some sort of employment sooner than those who only went to the initial group session. This has implications for the need to promote (with more vigour) clients' attendance beyond an initial visit. Perhaps initial contact and referral should emphasize the importance of maximizing each program component. In addition, it may be useful in future program content development, to enhance the first component by incorporating more immediately useful information (e.g. current job prospects, unemployment contact board which is up-to-date, etc).

Having one or more dependents on one's income remains a barrier to employment, regardless of how well informed the client may be. It is practical to assume that many clients with dependents have pre-school aged children and are, therefore, in need of additional information on daycare which is available to them, subsidies to which they may be entitled for this care and so on.

While it is well documented that being a visible minority (e.g. diverse race, cultures, disabilities etc) has been viewed as a barrier to employment, it does not appear that this program responds any differently to the needs of these client groups. Regardless of background, all clients seem to have the same "chances" or opportunities to access information, training, and/or employment. In future program development, it may be practical to account for these differences wherever possible to maintain this good access to the program.

While age and sex do not appear to play a role in a person's responsiveness or utilization of program information, level of education does seem to have an impact. As it is typical of the population as a whole, so to do clients with higher levels of education tend to use the information and advice given them more directly.

d) Program Satisfaction

Most clients receive some degree of satisfaction from their program experience. They like the information and find it helpful and easy to understand. Program staff are perceived as attentive to clients' needs and function well within its structure.

Clients who disliked the program did not find the information provided useful for their requirements. This does not reflect on the level of service; however, it does suggest that some clients have more specialized needs. It is possible that before referring these clients, more initial assessment of their information and/or practical employment needs should be carried out. Thus, providing information may be an important first step for some clients, but for others, it is not necessary or required.

Certainly, it is evident that the program has a positive impact on clients who are satisfied with their involvement, as many of these individuals tend to go to immediate employment.

4.5 Recommendations

1. **Wherever possible, in program resource planning, the diversity of the population being referred to the program should be taken into account. Initial contact made with potential clients should be sensitive to barriers such as English as a second language and cultural differences in perceptions of employment.**

2. **Computer printouts, from both CEIC and Regional Social Services caseloads and which are processed through Team 8 caseworkers, should be received on a more frequent and up-to-date basis. It is recommended that bi-weekly printouts be manufactured for this process as this will improve access to a more current caseload of potential program referrals.**

3.a) Ongoing trends analysis of monthly program attendance should continue, in addition to an ongoing analysis of the total program-eligible caseload (i.e., employable GWA, UIC pending and UIC (last 20 weeks clients). This information should be computer-analyzed and maintained in an up-to-date form.

b) Program planners should make use of this analyzed data to better measure which client-based variables are most significant in assessing client-program referrals and outcomes.

4. A "built-in" and ongoing client-based written survey should be developed and administered (voluntarily) to gain better access to clients' input regarding the program and its effects.

5.a) During both the introductory telephone contact (made through Team 8 case workers) and the initial group information sessions, it is imperative that staff promote the continued involvement of referred clients, beyond these phases.

b) More information, both written and verbal, should be made available to clients regarding the content of each program component, noting their various options within the program and the importance of remaining to the end of the second phase.

6. Materials developed as resources for clients attending the program should incorporate more supportive information, such as opportunities to access subsidized licensed day care, transportation alternatives, and so on.

5.0 PROGRAM-BASED EVALUATION

5.1 Identifying Program Development and Process Parameters: Structure, Content and Referral Mechanisms

a) Program Structure

1) Target Groups

Three principle target groups were identified as potential referrals and/or users of the Employment Awareness Program:

- Employable General Welfare Assistance clients who are pending Unemployment Insurance Benefits;
- Employable Unemployment Insurance recipients who are in their last 20 weeks of claim;
- Employable and job ready General Welfare Assistance clients.

2) Staffing

The Employment Awareness Project, housed at 1 Hunter Street East (Regional Employment Services Unit), was to be jointly staffed by Employment and Immigrant Canada (CEIC) counsellors, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services personnel, and other community groups (as appropriate). The number of employment advisors (the primary service providers) would be determined by the demand for service and the physical space available. In starting up the program, it was anticipated that seven employment advisors, four clerks and one coordinator would be required.

The staff were to provide employment support (including training assessment and referrals) for all target groups. The actual staff structure at program implementation comprised the following:

- 1 coordinator (funded by Employment Assistance Option);
- 4 clerks (2 funded through Social Services Employment Program; 2 funded by Employment Assistance Option);
- 7 employment advisors (5 funded through Social Services Employment Program; 2 provided through CEIC).

3) Reporting Responsibilities

Figure 3 illustrates the administrative and operational flow of responsibilities for program staff and management. The program coordinator is responsible for direction from a Joint Management Board comprising Regional Social Services and CEIC managers. The day-to-day operation of the program is administered through the Regional Social Services Department. All other program staff report through the coordinator and have access to each of the four clerks (scheduling assistants) employed by the program.

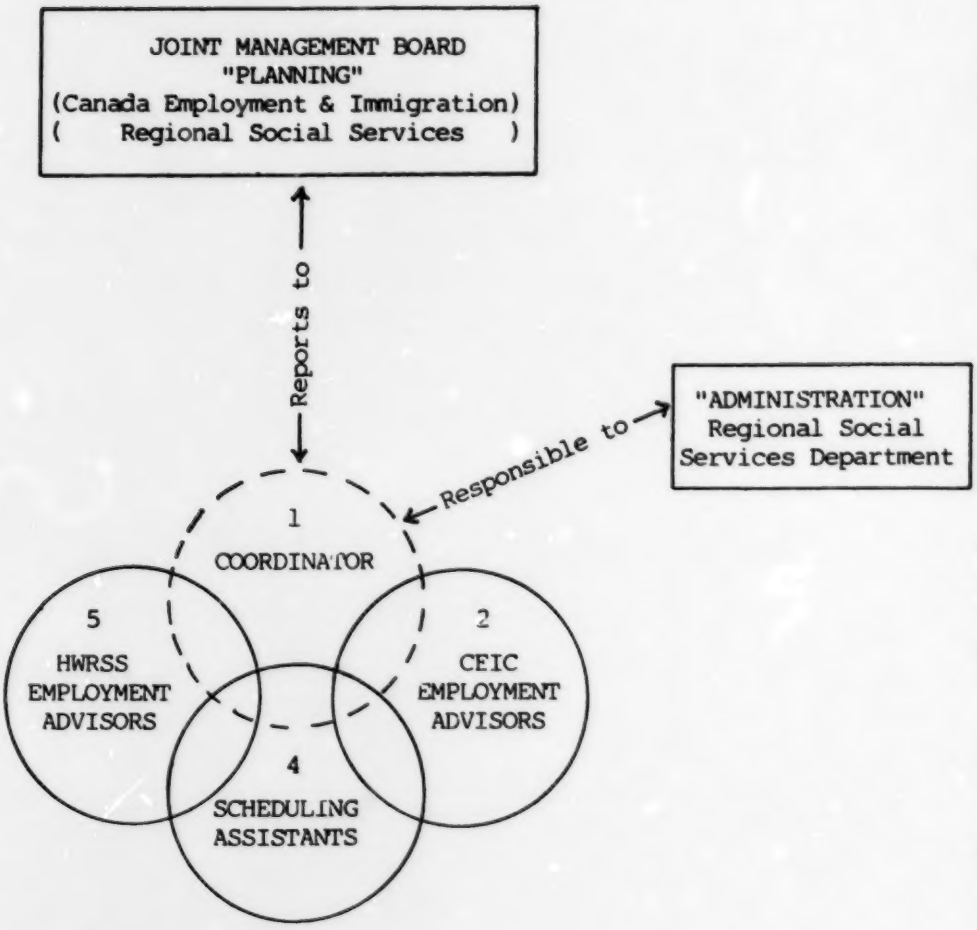


Figure 3: Administrative and Operational Flow Chart

b) Program Format/Content

1) Format

There were two primary program activities undertaken: 1) group-based information and 2) individual assessment and referral. The information received and/or assessments and referrals made are specifically tailored to reflect the difference(s) between the UIC and GWA target groups.

2) Content

i) Initial Group Information

Table 1 indicates the general contact areas for information provided each of the target groups serviced by the program. The main difference between these target groups is reflected in the initial group format.

TABLE 1: INITIAL GROUP INFORMATION PROVIDED UIC AND GWA RECIPIENTS

Unemployment Insurance Recipients	General Welfare Assistance Recipients
- Awareness of economic realities	- Awareness of economic realities
- Awareness of employment/training resources within the community	- Awareness of employment/training resources within the community
- Awareness of the services the program provides	- Awareness of the services the program provides
	- Clarification of GWA eligibility questions
	- Job search expectations while on GWA and later on UIC

ii) Individual Assessment and Referral

Clients can also access individualized assessment and/or referral counselling on a one-on-one basis, depending on their individual needs. This employment support is intended to assess employment strengths, identify, if any, and make referrals to appropriate employment or training opportunities.

Assessments of clients undertaken by counselling staff (i.e., Employment Advisors) were to incorporate a series of academic and interest measures, as well as any other "relevant" resource in the community. Referrals to existing community programs and courses were to be made in order that many individuals could acquire new skills, enhance their present skill base, or to reduce personal employment barriers such as illiteracy or problems with numeracy.

Clients were also to have access to specific information on community courses and programs. Community agencies (i.e., employment and other related programs.) were requested to provide, on a regular basis, an outline of their programs to the target groups.

iii) Community Agency Involvement

A number of community agencies were encouraged to provide information for the initial group sessions. The following is a brief description of certain specific organizations/programs considered most immediately relevant for client information needs.

Mohawk College

Mohawk College offers a vast number of courses which would be of assistance and interest to both target groups. It was expected that Mohawk would provide the most frequent, i.e., weekly/daily, information sessions.

Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA)

Representing the interests of all three Regional Boards of Education, the ABEA was considered the primary agent in providing information sessions on adult education within the parameters of Boards of Education programming. It was seen as a vehicle for streamlining the process of referrals to such programs.

Business Advisory Centre

This organization expressed an interest in providing entrepreneurial information for those individuals who want to start their own business and those who want to enhance their existing business.

TranSkills

Information regarding industrial and business needs and expectations was to be provided to all target groups.

Employment Consortium Committee

This Committee focuses on increasing employment opportunities for adults with disabilities in a non-workshop setting. Thus, the Consortium was encouraged to participate through information settings available to this specific target group.

Hamilton Help Centre

The Hamilton Help Centre currently provides a variety of employment-related services to both target groups. In addition to employment referrals, the Centre provides employment counselling and referrals to training. This organization has a long standing involvement with individuals who have been laid-off due to plant closures.

Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)

MCSS has two specific groups (sole support parents and the disabled) which may be receiving assistance pending Unemployment Insurance Benefits or who are in receipt of UIC and would qualify for Family Benefits Allowance. Information regarding employment and training, as well as income and eligibility was considered of benefit to this group.

c) Program Referral Process

General Welfare Assistance recipients were to be referred to the Employment Awareness Project by a GWA case worker (i.e, a Regional Social Services Department employee) from Team 8. Approximately 40 clients per day were to be referred, depending on caseload availability.

An additional 40 Unemployment Insurance recipients were to be contacted by mail or telephone through the CEIC.

Attendance by individuals in both groups was on a voluntary basis.

Figure 4 illustrates the process by which individuals from both target groups were initially referred and carried through the program.

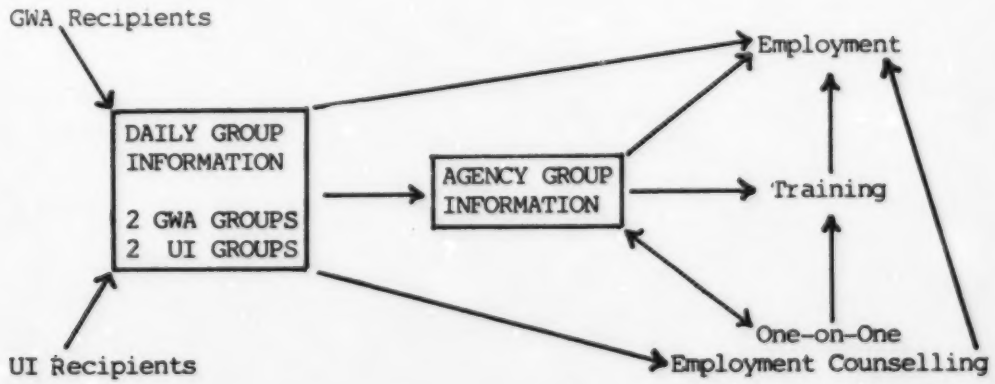


Figure 4a: Employment Awareness Program Referral Process (Initial Start-up) September 1991

In December 1991, program staff and members of the Joint Management Board reorganized the program flow model to better maximize community resources and also more accurately describe the process of intake and target group activity through the entire program (refer to Figure 4b).

5.2 Anticipated and Actual Program Outcomes

Functionally, on a day-to-day basis, the program was expected to provide two group sessions for GWA recipients and two group sessions for UIC recipients. Each group would comprise referrals (n = 20) for an overall daily referral quota of n = 80.

Group information was to be supplemented by individual employment counselling which would be available on request. The objective of one-to-one counselling was to clarify an individual's employability and to refer them, as needed, to appropriate training or employment.

a) Anticipated

It was anticipated that the program would be able, given staff resources, to process a total of n = 11,000 individuals over the 1991/92 year. This number represents the total number of referrals anticipated.

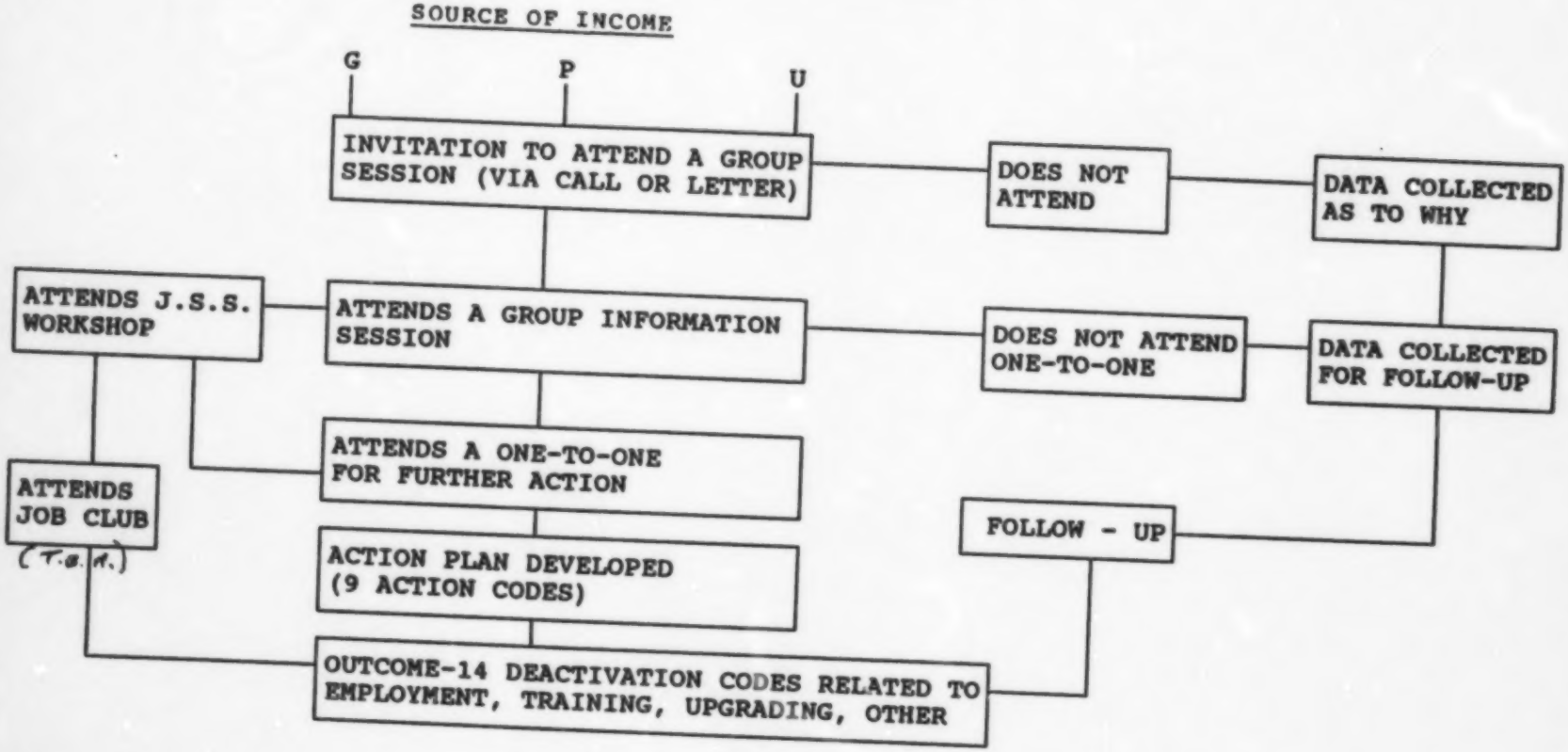
Of this total (n = 11,000), it was anticipated that 50% (n = 5,500) of these individuals would be referred directly to employment through this Employment Awareness Project. The remaining 50% (n = 5,500) were to be referred to training opportunities with various community partners (e.g., Mohawk College, CEIC, etc.).

b) Actual

Over a period of 4 months (September - December 1991), a total of n = 623 individuals receiving either GWA and pending UIC, UIC benefits (last 20 weeks), or employable and job-ready GWA clients, attended at least the initial group information session, as a result of being referred to the Employment Awareness Project. An additional n = 678 individuals were referred to the program over this 4 month period, but did not attend for a variety of reasons.

A total of n = 1,301 individuals were referred to the program in the first trimester of Year One. This figure represents only 12% (over 4 months) of the anticipated n = 11,000 cases which were to be referred through the program by the end of the first year. If the actual number of referrals was to continue at this pace, by the end of the first year, the program might expect to reach 50% of its original goal, or n = 5,500.

TARGET GROUP (EAP)


SOURCE OF INCOME
G
P
U
INVITATION TO ATTEND A GROUP SESSION (VIA CALL OR LETTER)
DOES NOT ATTEND
DATA COLLECTED AS TO WHY
ATTENDS J.S.S. WORKSHOP
ATTENDS A GROUP INFORMATION SESSION
DOES NOT ATTEND ONE-TO-ONE
DATA COLLECTED FOR FOLLOW-UP
ATTENDS A ONE-TO-ONE FOR FURTHER ACTION
ATTENDS JOB CLUB
(T.B.A.)
FOLLOW - UP
ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED (9 ACTION CODES)
OUTCOME-14 DEACTIVATION CODES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, UPGRADING, OTHER

NOTES: Source of income (S.O.I) and referral source
- G: job ready GWA recipient; referral source
- P: employable GWA recipient pending regular benefits; from print out.
- U: UI recipient in last 20 weeks of regular claim; from CEC printout

JOB SEARCH STRATEGY (J.S.S.) WORKSHOP & JOB CLUB:

In a supportive group setting, the J.S.S. (job search strategy) and job club prepares the job ready client through goal setting, resume writing, and development of interview skills These activities are staffed by Mohawk College and supported by Employment Progams, Job Developers.

Figure 4b: Employment Awareness Program Referral Process
(effective December 1991)

Of course, this actual number represents only the first 4 months. It is possible that, in the remaining 8 months of the project's first year, any number of environmental, labour market, process, or client-based variables could influence the number of referrals to the program.

5.3 Staff Member Interviews

This analysis was designed to examine different components of the Employment Awareness Project as perceived by staff members. These staff members were asked to analyze the program from a structural, and functional standpoint, their perceptions of clients and how the program impacted on them and, in turn, on the program, what are the impacts of the program on the community as a whole, and what new employment initiatives they felt the community would support in this Region.

a) Background on Staff Members

Out of nine staff members involved in the program, eight were interviewed for this study. Seven of the staff members held the title of Employment Advisor with the other staff member being Co-ordinator of the program.

Their academic and/or professional background consisted mainly of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, and any where from two years to 19 years of experience working for the Welfare Department, Social Services Department or the Canada Employment and Immigration Centre (CEIC) doing various jobs.

The duties and responsibilities of staff members was to run the information sessions three times a week, to deal with the clients on a one-to-one basis where they would help clients with goal setting, job search techniques, referring them to the different programs available for training or retraining, and keeping them abreast of any labour market changes.

b) Perception of Program

The staff members saw the structure of the program as a joint project between the CEIC and the Social Services Department. They felt that bringing these two partners together was beneficial and helped to provide the clients with a better service.

They saw the function of the program as one of trying to steer clients away from General Welfare Assistance and to give them options (programs for retraining/training), that could better their employability. Also to increase the clients' awareness to labour market changes and help them to adopt to these changes and to establish realistic employment goals.

It is interesting to note that almost all staff members felt that from an administration standpoint, the structure and function of the program was effective, but most felt that there were still problems with it.

Some of these problems, from a structural standpoint, were that there was too much red tape; they needed direct contact with the CEIC. One member felt that the program should be located at the CEIC to alleviate this problem. Some felt they needed a wider target group so they could reach more clients. Some other structural changes offered up were that they needed access to computer information so that they would have more time to deal with clients and not to be on the phone with the CEIC i.e., an on-site CEIC computer system. It also needed to be less political, more trust between the program and CEIC, and required more exchange of information. It was noted that a person should be maintained at the Co-ordinator level who knows other agencies and has a strong employment background and authority at both the federal and municipal levels. Finally, all information received from all agencies needs to be accurate and up to date.

From a functional point of view, most felt that they were serving an important need in the community and that they were giving clients information more quickly and conveniently than they could receive elsewhere. Only one staff person felt that their method of contacting the clients - by phoning them - was too slow and an inefficient process. Telephone contact is the most efficient and effective means of booking group sessions. A contact letter was also sent if no answer was made by phone and included a follow-up phone call.

Most staff members were satisfied with the overall process of awareness counselling and referral offered through the program. They felt as a majority that the CEIC and Social Services offers the clients more information and offers it more quickly.

The down side was that they needed more CEIC-funded training options or programs (such as charge-back, DPO) to better service the needs of the clients. There is a need to promote with more vigour the importance of maximizing each program component.

c) Perception of the Client

It was found that all staff members were fairly pleased with the information and guidance given to the clients through this program. They felt that once the clients were in the program they were provided help in every way, from finding jobs, to programs for retraining, to resume writing, to job search techniques. It was also noted that they offered the clients a full understanding of their situation and what the economic realities are that they would face. It was also observed that, given a chance, they could still be doing more. That meant eliminating the red tape between delivery sponsors (i.e., the program and CEIC).

The only significant patterns or indicators noticed by staff members over the life of the program regarding clients' use of the program, were that people who attended one-to-one sessions tended to be more highly motivated and would come in the morning to the offices. People on UIC have a higher skill/education level than the GWA group, and that more men than women come through their doors, and there were more educated and skilled people than they have seen before. The final pattern noticed was that the higher educated clients were more receptive and willing to take jobs outside of the Region.

The majority of staff members felt that the program had a very positive impact on clients. It gave them assistance, guidance and moral support during a difficult time in their lives. They were more focused on job targets and on improving their employability when they left the office, they were less frustrated and had more self-esteem.

As to how these impacts will affect the future of the program, most staff members felt that more programs were needed to be made available to help the clients. For some, there was a need to get the information to them more quickly so they can get them placed into a program before they fill up. For others there is a need to expand the target group.

Bringing in employers to talk to clients regularly in group sessions would be beneficial to let the client know what is expected of them in that job field. Maximizing employment advisors' involvement in input into the services that should be available, and to have the program become an information centre to help identify to funders which programs/jobs clients are interested in and which jobs offer the best chance of employment so more funds can be made available for these is a final area of concern.

d) Community-Based Perceptions

Most of the staff members felt that the program fit in well with the larger network of employment-related programs across the Region. They felt it enhanced it, created another opportunity for clients, gave them one stop shopping - everything from resume writing to program referral - and that this was due to the combined effort of the joint project of CEIC and Social Services, with the support of Mohawk College.

In terms of short term impacts of the program, most staff members felt that it was helping greatly with the overload of clients waiting to see a counsellor. It is also helping clients to be more focused, positive and informed, and to have accessibility to programs or employment related services.

As for the long term impacts, most staff members would like to see a larger target group so that they could continue to ease the backlog of clients at the CEIC. Thus, continuing to help people get back into the

workforce via retraining or job locating so that they will come off GWA or UIC, or after UIC will not go on GWA is still its principle focus.

The majority of staff members felt that during this period of economic chaos the program was important to the Hamilton-Wentworth community. It helped in ensuring the backlog of clients waiting to see counsellors could be served and in giving hope and direction to the unemployed.

As for new employment initiatives that would be helpful to this Region, the staff members were full of ideas. It was suggested that central access is the key to employment problems, to have more agencies involved directly and working out of one office to be more effective. Mentioned also was that the program should be more diversified such as actually placing clients in jobs. Getting rid of labels was another suggestion for no one likes to go into a welfare office, but to come into the program office you would not receive that label.

Some would like to see employability enhanced by means of a self market program, where the client goes out and finds a job then has part of their salary funded to encourage the employer to hire the client. Some other suggestions were having better contact with employers so they would know what to do and be more supportive, to have more co-operation between various agencies at the same level of government, to offer more training programs that are less expensive and training supports, such as subsidized licenced day care or bus passes for job search.

5.4 Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn regarding program structure, contact, referrals and outcomes.

First, it is evident that the original goal of referring and processing n = 11,000 potential clients over the first year of the project may not be met. This is logical to assume, if the trend indicated within the study was to continue at its current pace. It is more likely that half of this original estimate will be referred, or approximately 5,000 - 6,000 individuals. It is not possible, given only the first four months of data, to project these numbers more accurately.

In terms of program structure, the existing partnership between CEIC and the Regional Social Services Department is considered effective as a means of better servicing the specific information needs of Unemployment Insurance and Social Assistance recipients.

While the program is perceived to be effective from within its infrastructure, there are still many functional inconsistencies and barriers to be addressed in future development.

More specifically, there is a need to "cut through the red tape" in terms of more direct contact between the sponsoring agencies at the level of advising. In achieving this objective, it may be necessary to carry out more regular exchanges of information. This information may relate to labour market potential, employment and training opportunities for both U.I. and Social Assistance recipients, new economic initiatives in the community, client problem-solving techniques and models to name only a few examples.

Functionally, the program's infrastructure (given its size, scope, and resources) is working at a maximum to achieve its targets for client groups. Use of the telephone as the primary means for contacting clients cannot stand alone as the most effective method for reaching individuals successfully. Some staff follow-up by means of written letter is still preferred, where necessary.

In terms of client self-referrals and active client participation rates, there is a need to better inform the contact caseworkers or employment officers fielding enquiries as to the availability of the program and its intended uses. The logical connection made between sources external to the program (e.g., caseworkers), clients looking for information, and the Employment Awareness Project staff is at times "hit-and-miss". This, however, is more likely a reflection of the limited time frame over which the program has existed.

From a program delivery perspective, it is presumed that clients receive the best and most current information available in the Region. Much of this is due to the liaison effect that agency group information sessions might bring to the program. Conversely, it may also be due to sharing of information by staff who act as a liaison with various agencies.

Most program delivery staff feel very strongly that the program did play a positive role in the employability of participants. Staff need to have a greater role in the decision-making that takes place regarding content, materials, and other resources as they are the ones receiving the most immediate client needs information and feedback. This is best facilitated through the existing practice of "daily briefing sessions" already functioning within the program.

In terms of time-based impacts, the program is most immediately helpful from a counselling overload perspective. This may be due to the "one-stop-shopping" opportunities afforded the clients in program sessions. In addition, it provides a meaningful jumping-off point for many clients who have not had to deal with unemployment (short or long-term) in the past and who, therefore, may not know the system.

It is important that this program function as efficiently as possible, in order that more clients can be targeted for information and awareness needs. Thus, the backlog of clients having other needs such as benefits clarification, direct referrals and so on, can be better serviced. This is particularly true regarding clients referred through CEIC.

Central access to employment information, skill development, individual counselling, and other employment-related agencies is also critical during these economic times. Where possible, direct placement into training should be maximized.

5.5 Recommendations

1. A CEIC computer system should be maintained on-site to better expedite client service and to ensure the accuracy of up-to-date client data.

2. The current practice of initial direct telephone contact through a Team 8 caseworker should be continued. In addition, the use of a contact letter as either an introductory or follow-up procedure should be maintained.

3. More CEIC-funded training options, such as charge-backs and DPO, should be incorporated into the program's information options. There is a need for more vigorous in-house emphasis, on the part of staff, to discuss and maximize the utility of all program components.

4. Promote the need and opportunity for a greater responsiveness by employers to meet with clients regularly in group sessions to heighten awareness of the employment preparation needs and expectations within their respective fields.

5.a) Program planners should continue to analyze client-impact and structural/functional developments within a comprehensive self-evaluation framework.

b) Any self-evaluative mechanism should incorporate feedback and information which is both outcome and process-oriented. Thus, evaluation is critical throughout the life of the program.

c) The methodology used in such a self-evaluation process should consider at least three critical perspectives.

   1) Program clients and/or potential clients;

2) Other primary program stakeholders (e.g., Joint Management Board, program staff, ancillary agents involved in program development);

3) Community-based interests (secondary stakeholders).

6. The current practice of "daily briefing sessions" for program staff should continue and become more integrated with any ongoing evaluation process.

7.a) Centralized access to employment awareness information, counselling, other employment-related agencies and, where possible, direct placement into training, should be maintained and strengthened to ensure re-entry into the job market.

b) The liaison and involvement of Mohawk College in the development of the Job Search Strategy (JSS) Workshop and Job Club should continue, with the support of Employment Programs Job Developers.

6.0 COMMUNITY-BASED EVALUATION

6.1 Trends in the Regional Labour Market

A (1982 - 1990) survey of the employed labour force in the Region conducted by the Planning and Development Department, was developed for monitoring the basic characteristic of the labour force.[2] Examination of local employment trends is critical to understanding the employment-based needs of the overall population.

In the context of this community-based data, more effective program planning can become a reality. This information, coupled with input from community stakeholders provides important input to the planning process.

A survey of the entire Region was carried out in 1982 with a follow-up survey in 1990. Both examined the employed labour force. Over this time period, total employment in Hamilton-Wentworth increased by almost 16,880 workers from 176,655 in 1982 to 193,530 in 1990. In addition, the largest increases in employment were in office and retail jobs while the number of manufacturing jobs decreased.

An additional demographic profile over the same period (1982 - 90) demonstrated some important trends (refer to Figure 5):[3]

- The number of women in the Hamilton-Wentworth labour force has increased from 68,600 in 1982 to 89,350 in 1990 - an increase of 33%; women now make up 47% of the employed labour force in the Region.

- Male employment declined by 6,275 workers, from 108,060 in 1982 to 101,785 in 1990. Males now represent 53% of the employed labour force.

- Part-time employment (i.e., less than or equal to 20 hours per week) has increased dramatically to a point where it now comprises 20% of the total workforce. Only 13% of males in the Region work part-time while over 30% of females work part-time.

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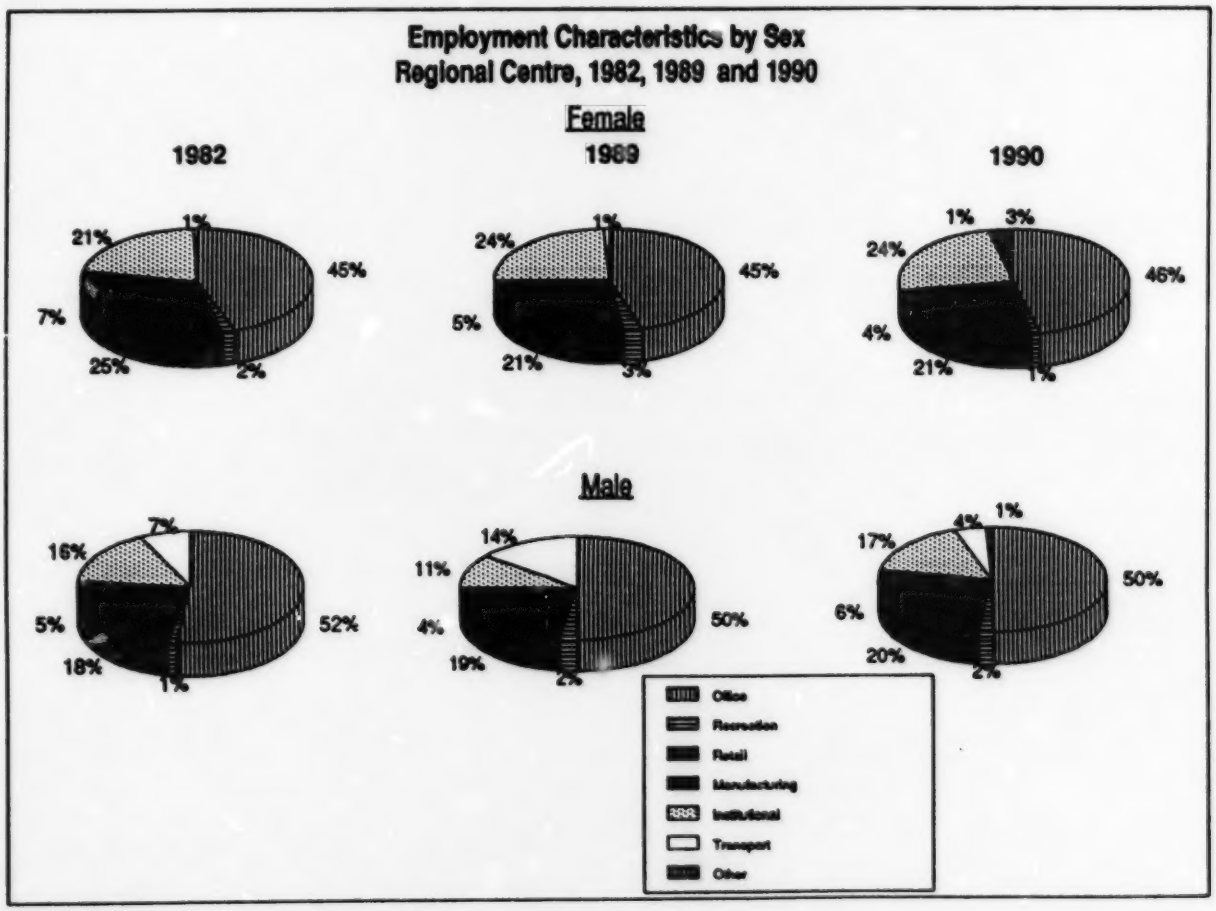
2 Hamilton-Wentworth Region (1991) "Greater Hamilton Employment Trends: Bulletin, July, 1991". Planning and Development Department, Strategic Planning Division.

3 Ibid.

- Employment increased in areas of retail, office and institutional activities, while it declined significantly in the manufacturing and transportation sectors.

- Approximately 66% of the Hamilton-Wentworth workforce is employed in the service sector. This is still lower than national population figures, set at 71% of the workforce.

FIGURE 5



7.0 SUMMARY

Client-Based Considerations

There are a number of client-based implications for future Employment Awareness Project development.

First, program content and structure should remain sensitive to the needs of clients, identified both demographically and as described by clients as self-identified barriers to employment, throughout the study. Client age and diversity of educational background should figure prominently in the enhanced development of a program which is flexible in terms of materials, resource availability, and its ability to maximize client participation.

It is likewise important to continue monitoring trends in the Regional workforce in order to better anticipate and adjust to any changes in the information and awareness needs of potential clients. By and large, the client population for a program such as this will not change significantly in terms of self-identified needs. However, understanding the "make-up" of client groups should be critical to specific program development.

Certainly, the current study has identified a need to enhance staff support to the client in order to continue past the initial session and seek further program involvement. The research indicates this "second step" as being critical to improving the job prospects and awareness potential of each client. Whether this support is direct or indirect, during the initial contact or at the initial group information session, requires more discussion. Optimally, clients should receive as much individual attention as possible, without compromising resources to benefit the larger client group.

Client responses have demonstrated that the need for employment-related information and access to training programs is a critical factor in one's opting to attend the Employment Awareness Project.

Gaining better access to these clients may require more than just a phone call. If possible, future program resources should also account for supporting literature and/or correspondence to prospective clients.

Program participants have indicated a need for specific materials and information regarding training opportunities, apprenticeship programs, and small business development. In future development of resources, program planners should ensure that these expressed needs are considered.

In terms of program impact on clients, the research suggests that full involvement in the program is

directly related to greater employment potential post-program. It is important to emphasize this relationship during initial contact.

The research has also confirmed a typical need of clients on social assistance which has been borne out with every new study on this Region. That is, clients need more information on available daycare options and subsidies to which they may be entitled.

While it was not indicated as a problem by most clients in this study, more thought and planning should be considered regarding the diverse racial and cultural backgrounds of clients. This is especially true where reading material and group sessions are being developed.

In general, clients experience satisfaction with their program involvement. They appreciate the helpfulness of staff and understand the information and advice received. Those who disliked the program most often did not find its content useful. Further needs assessment in-program may provide planners with more insight regarding specific needs not yet addressed.

Structural/Functional Considerations

The partnership established through the formation of a Joint Management Board and shared program staff appears effective, based on initial feedback. There are, however, a number of inconsistencies and barriers regarding the functional efficiency of the program within this structure.

The need to streamline the process of referrals and establish more direct and meaningful contact between staff at the level of planning and delivery is crucial to an enhanced process. More frequent and regular exchanges of information is one example of an in-program initiative.

There is a need to have more direct contact (and impact) with caseworkers and CEC counsellors who are critical first informants for the clients. These individuals should have full knowledge of the program and be aware of its usefulness measured herein.

It is also critical that any information-based program, such as the Employment Awareness Project, maintain the most comprehensive, current and most accessible information available across the Region. This requires that in-house research on agencies, initiatives, subsidies and other employment-based information be established and maintained on an ongoing basis.

Ongoing evaluation of the current status of the Employment Awareness Project and its utility and

effectiveness within the community should continue to demonstrate the need to maintain a central and accessible program. That is, one which heightens community awareness about employment, skills training, job counselling and the availability of other employment agencies in Hamilton-Wentworth.

Implications

The primary objective of the Employment Awareness Project was to increase the client's awareness of program and training opportunities which were available to them. Based upon the limited number of client responses which were received in this evaluation, the program did appear to experience some success in this regard - particularly with clients who were involved for the full program duration. Participation in the program, in turn, was affected by a variety of ancillary factors which reflect the results of other evaluations of local employment programs - child care, transportation and family circumstances. This project, therefore, reconfirmed the importance of these factors as barriers to accessing employment programs.

It is beyond the capacity of this evaluation to draw firm conclusions about the impact of the program upon client employability. The limited number of responses to the client survey has restricted the ability of the study to draw concrete conclusions and the relative "newness" of the program prevents an examination of effects upon long-term employability. Some evidence pertaining to this issue is available from studies of similar programs in other jurisdictions.

Within the general continuum of employment programs, the Employment Awareness Project program falls within the category of "employment preparation" initiatives. These programs attempt to enhance client employability through increasing knowledge about support programs, augmenting life skills and supplementing job search skills. With respect to social assistance clients, recent evaluations have suggested that programs of this type have relatively little impact on the subsequent employment of clients. For example, a recent analysis by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services of three programs reported negligible effects on clients.[4] The three programs analyzed were:

1) Employment Support Initiatives - a pre-employment program for sole support parents
2) Youth Program Preparation Program - a pre-employment program for youth.
3) Social Services Employment Program - a program which provides up to 12 months of work experience.

The results of the Ontario study were consistent with the results of a number of similar U.S. programs.

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[4] Porter, E. The Long Term Effects of Three Employment Programs for Social Assistance Recipients. Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, November 1991.

Somewhat more positive results were reported for the Federal Government's Job Development program.[5] This program incorporated employment preparation with training subsidies and employment subsidies.

Employment preparation programs such as the Employment Awareness Project need to be viewed in the context of a continuum of employment services which includes training, placement, subsidies, job creation initiatives and a host of macro-economic policies. The evidence, to date, suggests that this type of program, in isolation, can have only limited impacts upon client employability, particularly with respect to the longer-term unemployed. The act of better informing persons about labour market trends and support programs will contribute relatively little if programs are at capacity and job vacancies are at low levels.

Within the general continuum of employment services, there is some consensus in the literature about the relative impacts of various program options. For example, a 1988 international review of programs by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris concluded that "direct employment-creation measures" were the only proven mechanism for putting unemployed persons back to work.[6] "On the basis of its review, the Panel is led to conclude that it is only through such measures that many of the existing unskilled and less well educated long-term unemployed can be helped" (pg.70).

The results pertaining to the Federal Job Development program which were cited above, reinforced the need for co-ordinated training and job subsidy initiatives.

In general, the results of a variety of studies support the direction of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth as reported in their initiative.

The ultimate decision about the quantity of future resources which should be allocated to the Employment Awareness Project will depend upon the relative priority which employment preparation programs should have within the continuum of employment initiatives for the 1992-93 period.

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5 Rahman, S. and Gera, S. Long-Term Unemployment in Canada: Its Causes and Policy Implications. Economic Council of Canada. Canadian Unemployment. Ottawa, 1991.

6 OECD. Measures to Assist the Long-Term Unemployed. Recent Experience in Some OECD Countries. Paris, 1988.

APPENDIX A

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVER LETTER.

FILE

February, 1992

Dear Employment Awareness Program Participant:

Recently, you were involved as a participant in the Employment Awareness Program, a pilot project currently being sponsored by the Regional Social Services Department and Employment and Immigration Canada. As part of a study to determine progress made in this project, the Social Planning and Research Council (a local United Way agency) has agreed to collect feedback from participants on their experience with the program.

Enclosed is a short survey which asks you some questions about your own Employment Awareness Program experience. Your responses will help program staff in continuing to develop this program. Complete directions are provided. Please fill in all parts of the survey and return it in the enclosed Business Reply envelope, no later than February 28, 1992.

The information you provide will remain both anonymous and confidential. Only research staff at the Social Planning and Research Council will have access to your survey. If you have any questions or concerns about completing this survey, please call Brian Bodo at the Social Planning and Research Council at 522-1148.

Thanks, in advance, for your help in this study.

Sincerely,

Jim Boles
Manager
Employment Services Unit

JB/cb
encl. 3

EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS PROJECT
1 Hunter Street

Follow-up Evaluation Questionnaire

(√) Would you please answer the following questions by filling in the blanks, placing a check in the box provided or writing your answer in the appropriate space.

1) Which of the following was your source of income when you attended the Employment Awareness Program. (Located at 1 Hunter Street).

Unemployment Insurance	[ ]
General Welfare Assistance	[ ]
Other (please specify)	[ ]

2) What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Less than Grade 9	[ ]	Grade 13	[ ]
Grade 9	[ ]	Community College	[ ]
Grade 10	[ ]	University	[ ]
Grade 11	[ ]	Other Post-Secondary	[ ]
Grade 12	[ ]	Trades Certification	[ ]

3) Are you currently?

Employed full time	[ ]
Employed part-time	[ ]
In a training program	[ ]
Waiting for a training program	[ ]
Looking for work	[ ]
Not looking for work	[ ]

4) If you are employed, is your occupation the same as before your involvement in this program?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

5) If currently employed, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Very satisfied	[ ]
Satisfied	[ ]
Unsatisfied	[ ]
Very Unsatisfied	[ ]

6) If not currently employed, what was your most recent occupation?

_____

7) Please state your reason(s) for attending the Employment Awareness Program.

Curiosity, the program called, I came in	[ ]
I was looking for employment information	[ ]
I was looking for training information	[ ]
Other_____	

8) Did you attend a group or individual session? or both?

Group [ ] Individual [ ] Both [ ] Neither [ ]

If no, why not?

_____

_____

9) If you attended the session, how satisfied with it were you?

Very satisfied	[ ]
Satisfied	[ ]
Unsatisfied	[ ]
Very Unsatisfied	[ ]

10) What did you like about the program?

_____

_____

_____

11) Did the Employment Awareness Program provide you with information which assisted you in getting into community training programs?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

12) What did you dislike about the program?

_____

_____

_____

13) Since your involvement in this program, have you contacted any agencies for academic upgrading, employment, training etc?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, which ones?

_____

_____

_____

14) Are you currently involved with any agencies for employment, academic upgrading, training, etc?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, what program activities/information would you need? (Please use a check ( ) to identify as many choices as you like).

[ ] Information and referral about possible employment
[ ] Employment skills training (e.g. resume writing, etc.)
[ ] Job-related skills training (e.g. programs to upgrade skills)
[ ] Financial assistance (e.g. GWA., UIC. etc)
[ ] Apprenticeship programs
[ ] Academic upgrading (e.g. high school level)

Others (please list)

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your co-operation. Your reply will remain completely confidential.

February, 1992/17

APPENDIX B

FACE-TO-FACE PROGRAM STAFF INTERVIEW FORM.

EAP SURVEY

SECTION I - BACKGROUND ON PARTICIPANT

1. What is your official job title?

_____

2. Please describe your job duties and responsibilities.

_____

_____

_____

3. What is your academic and/or professional background?

_____

_____

_____

SECTION II - PERCEPTION OF PROGRAM

1. Briefly describe the structure and function of the program as you see it.

_____

_____

_____

2. From an administration standpoint, do you feel the structure and function of the program is:

   a) Effective ( )

   b) Not Effective ( )

   Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. From an administration standpoint, what structural changes, if any, would you suggest should be implemented to effectively continue this program? (PLEASE LIST)

4. How satisfied are you with the overall process of awareness counselling and referral offered through this program? (PLEASE COMMENT)

SECTION III - PERCEPTION OF CLIENTS

1. In your opinion, are clients given enough information and/or guidance in this program, regarding employment awareness? (PLEASE ELABORATE)

2. Please elaborate on what reoccurring pattern or indicators you have noticed over the life of the program regarding clients use of this program?

3. In your opinion, what impacts can you see on clients from this program?

4. With regard to these impacts on clients, how does this affect future planning of this program?

SECTION IV - COMMUNITY-BASED PERCEPTIONS

1. Please describe how well you think this program fits into the larger network of employment-related programs across the Region?

2. Please describe what you feel the short and longer term impacts of the program will be?

3. What role, if any, does this program play in terms of addressing the needs of the Hamilton-Wentworth community during this period of economic disruption?

4. What new employment initiatives do you think the community would support in this Region?